A NOTE FOR SENIOR LEADERS

The decision you cannot take anywhere

On the one call you keep circling, and why more thinking will not settle it.

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THE THING YOU ARE SITTING WITH

There is a particular kind of decision that does not respond to more thinking.

You have run the logic. You have made the lists. You have lain awake at four in the morning arguing both sides until the argument eats itself. And in the morning you are exactly where you started, except more tired and quietly worried that the not deciding is becoming the decision.

You know the one. Whether to leave. Whether to push for the role above you or finally admit you are not sure you want it. Whether to move the senior person everyone respects and you no longer trust. Whether the company is going somewhere you actually want to follow.

The problem is not that you cannot think clearly. You think for a living. The problem is that there is nowhere to take it.

You cannot take it to your boss, because the question is partly about them. You cannot take it to your peers, because at your level your peers are also your competition, and vulnerability is currency you do not hand out for free. The people who report to you need you to be certain. Your partner has heard it so many times the conversation now has a shape you both perform rather than have. And a therapist feels too slow for something that has a clock on it.

So it stays in your head. Where it circles.

Here is what I want to name, because almost nobody says it to people at your level.

The reason the decision feels impossible is usually not the decision.

It is that the decision is tangled up in something underneath it that you have not let yourself look at directly. Often it is this: the work that made you good at your job, the thing you were genuinely brilliant at, is no longer the thing your job is. Other people do that now, and some of them do it better than you ever did. What you are left holding is influence and judgment and politics, and a quiet grief you have not named because naming it feels like weakness.

The decision you are circling is frequently a proxy for that. Should I leave is sometimes really, *where did the part of this I loved go.* Should I push for the bigger role is sometimes really, *will more of this make the hollow feeling worse or better.*

You cannot decide the surface question while the real one is running underneath it unexamined. That is why the lists do not work.

So before you make the call, four questions. Not to give you the answer. To show you which question you are actually answering.

1 The answer before the analysis

If you knew for certain no one would judge you for it, which way would you go right now, today, without another week of thinking? Notice the answer that arrives before you talk yourself out of it. That first answer is data. It is not the decision, but it is data, and you have been overruling it with analysis for weeks.

2 What the delay is protecting

What are you protecting by not deciding? Not deciding is itself a choice, and it is buying you something. Certainty you do not have to test. A version of yourself you do not have to update. Find the thing the delay is protecting. It is usually the real subject.

3 What you would see from the outside

Strip the decision back. If this were happening to someone you respect and they came to you with it, what would you see in thirty seconds that they cannot see from the inside? You already know this answer. You give it to other people all the time. You are simply not allowed to hear it from yourself.

4 The version of you a year from now

Imagine you have made the decision, either way, and a year has passed. Sit in each version for a moment. Not which outcome is better on paper. Which version of you do you respect more. The decision you can live with is rarely the optimal one. It is the one where you recognise the person who made it.

If you work those four honestly, you will usually find the decision was never the hard part. The hard part was the thing the decision was sitting on top of. And that thing does not resolve on a page. It resolves in the work of looking at who you have become in this role, what it has cost, and what you actually want the next version to be for.

That is the work I do with people. Not framework. Not advice you could have found yourself.

The root cause underneath the symptom, which is almost always an identity that served you brilliantly on the way up and is quietly working against you now.

IF SOMETHING SURFACED

If the questions surfaced something real, that is what a conversation with me is for.

No pitch. One pattern, worked through in depth, and a clear view of what addressing it would change.

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THE CLARITY INTENSIVE

A single ninety minute session to work one pattern in depth. One conversation, the root cause named, a clear view of what addressing it would change.

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